

Immortal Secrets

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Summary: HighlanderBuffy Joyce tries to drag Buffy on a nice relaxing vacation, but all does not go as planned.

Immortal Secrets

Joyce Summers sat down on a stool in her gallery. She was supposed to be unpacking her latest shipment, but too many other things were on her mind.

Less than a year ago she had thought her daughter simply was going through a stage of rebellion. Buffy was a good kid, and everything would be made better if Joyce could only be there for her daughter.

Then in a few short hours, she learned that her daughter masqueraded as a superhero by night. Her 18-year old child was the Slayer, the only person with the power to stop vampires, the no longer mythical undead creatures of the night. And if that weren't enough, a few short hours later, Buffy ran away and Joyce was left alone, no knowing if she was safe.

When Buffy got back things hadn't miraculously gotten better, like they were supposed to. First, one of her best friends died, became a zombie, and then was destroyed by Buffy. Then there was that whole band candy thing. The less said about that, the better.

And if all that wasn't enough, Joyce had to start a witch-hunt in Sunnydale that almost ended with her burning her daughter at the stake.

No, Joyce had been through a very stressful time, and she needed a break. Reaching a decision, she went over and picked up the phone, dialing a long distance number.

It rang three times before the person on the other end picked it up.

"Hello," a deep, masculine voice greeted.

"Hi Duncan. This is Joyce. I've been thinking about what you said, and I'd like to take you up on your offer."

* * *

> <p> "You're what?" Willow exclaimed. <p>

"I'm going to Seacouver with my mom for spring break," Buffy repeated.

"But you can't go."

"Try telling my mom that," Buffy said dryly.

"But who will stop all the vampires and demons when you're gone?" asked Willow.

"You guys will just have to survive without me. You've done it before."

"I suppose," Willow said reluctantly. "Why Seacouver?"

"An old friend of my mom's lives there and has invited us to stay for the week," Buffy explained.

"Have you told Giles yet?"

"Yes. He's a bit worried, but mom sort of insisted."

"Your mom does seem to be stubborn about some things, doesn't she."

"Yeah, she does." Buffy looked at her watch. "Oh. I promised Giles I'd stop by the library. Gotta run. See ya later!" With that, Buffy ran off towards the library.

Willow gathered her books and headed for class, praying that the local vampires didn't decide the time to play was while the Slayer's away.

* * *

> <p> "So who's this friend of yours that's coming?" Joe Dawson asked his friend. <p>

"Joyce Summers. She and Tessa used to be good friends. She's bringing her daughter, Buffy, with her."

Joe inwardly winced at the name. Poor girl. Who in their right mind would call their daughter Buffy? He kept a straight face, however, as he asked the girl's age.

"16 or 17, I think," Duncan answered. "I haven't seen either of them in years."

Duncan broke off and turned towards the door. He had the "look" that meant another immortal was nearby.

Sure enough, the door opened to reveal Methos, the world's oldest immortal. The 5000 year old man came up to the bar counter. He greeted Joe and Duncan and asked for a beer.

"Where've you been?" Duncan asked. He hadn't seen the old man in months.

"Around," Methos told him. "What have you been up to?"

"Not much. Life's been pretty boring for the last few months."

Methos gave him a look that spoke volumes. He did not believe the Highlander. Duncan MacLeod's life was never boring. It often seemed like Seacouver was an Immortal hotspot. Rarely did a week pass in which some immortal did not show up.

"I'm sure," Methos said sarcastically.

Duncan ignored him. Instead he said, "Actually, an old friend of mine is coming tomorrow for the week. You should meet her."

"An old friend?" Methos repeated skeptically, "I think I'll pass."

"She's not that kind of old friend. She's mortal."

"I suppose I'll see her tomorrow, then."

The conversation turned away from talk of the Summers. The two Immortals and the Watcher spent the rest of the night drinking and catching up on old times.

* * *

> <p> Buffy was upset. She had pleaded with her mom all week, but her mother wouldn't give in. She insisted Buffy had to come with her. They had just gotten off the plane and retrieved their luggage. Her mother was looking through the crowds, trying to find Duncan.
<p>

"Joyce!" Duncan cried.

He was off to their left. He was waving his hand to catch their attention. He was also a lot more handsome than Buffy remembered. Of course, she hadn't seen him since before she had really hit puberty.

"Duncan!" Joyce exclaimed. She ran over to greet her friend leaving Buffy to carry the luggage. She dragged it over and waited for them to stop hugging each other.

"You haven't changed a bit," Joyce was saying. "I'd swear you don't look a day older than you did when I met you."

Duncan laughed a bit uncomfortably. "Neither do you," he lied. "And Buffy! You've grown up. How old are you now?"

"18," she told him, a bit coldly. She was still resenting the trip and fully planned on sulking for the first couple of days.

"18!" Duncan repeated, surprised, "Already? Last time I saw you, you were only 11."

"That was 7 years ago."

"Buffy," Joyce warned. She knew how annoyed Buffy was, but she didn't know why. She assumed Buffy would want a break from her slaying duties once in awhile.

"Here, let me help you with your bags. The car's this way." Duncan led them over to the airport parking lot where he had parked the car. Buffy sat in the back, looking forlornly out the window while Joyce and Duncan talked about old times. She wished for the hundredth time she could be back in Sunnydale with her friends.

Presently they got to Duncan's apartment. Buffy unpacked her suitcase, carefully hiding the stakes and holy water she couldn't bring herself to leave behind. After everything was put away, she wandered back out to the kitchen.

"Buffy," her mother said, "Duncan and I were about to go to this gallery that just opened. Do you want to join us?"

"Not really." Actually there were a billion things Buffy would rather be doing.

"Are you sure? It'll be boring staying here by yourself."

Buffy rolled her eyes. 'Not as boring as the gallery would be,' she thought. Aloud she said, "I'm sure, mom. I'll find something to do."

"Okay then. We won't be long."

"Help yourself to anything," Duncan told her.

"Bye honey." They left and Buffy was finally alone.

She grabbed a snack and waited ten minutes to be safe. Then Buffy went out exploring.

She found a payphone and called Willow using the phone card she'd bought back in Sunnydale.

"Hello?" the hacker said when she answered the phone.

"Hi Will. It's Buffy."

"Buffy!" Willow exclaimed cheerfully, "How was your flight?"

"It was fine. We got here about an hour ago."

"How is it?"

"Not very nice. Mom and Duncan have already abandoned me, and they'll probably do that a lot more before the end of the week."

"Do you actually want to hang out with them?"

"Not really, it's just . . . " Buffy sighed. I don't know what it is. I wish I was back in Sunnydale."

"Why?" Willow asked. "I would've thought you'd want a vacation. Especially from slaying."

"Not really. I mean, I always wanted to be rid of being the Slayer, but all this talk about Faith taking over for me when I go to college has changed my mind."

Willow laughed at that.

"No really," Buffy insisted. "And then that whole thing on my birthday. I like being the Slayer, and killing vampires and saving the world," she confided to her best friend.

"Buffy, we aren't about to replace you. You're just on vacation. Enjoy yourself."

"Maybe you're right," the Slayer admitted. "I have to go now. Talk to ya later."

"Bye," Willow said.

Buffy hung up and went back to Duncan's place. Her mother and Duncan weren't back yet, luckily. Buffy grabbed a book and read until they returned.

They were laughing, of course. Neither of them could see Buffy's face, which was a good thing. She thought she could feel some kind of weird sensation, similar to the one she sometimes got from vampires. Similar, but different. Of course, Buffy wasn't very good at sensing, so she just ignored it. The sun was still out; it couldn't be a vampire.

When they did turn to Buffy, the slayer had gotten control of her emotions. She soon forgot about, because Joyce told her to go get changed. They were going out to dinner.

Duncan took them to a fancy restaurant. Buffy felt more than a little out of place. Everyone was dressed up and everything looked really expensive. It also didn't help that her two companions were still playing 'Do you remember?' You'd think that they'd had enough already. They had been talking about the past all day.

"Do you still ice skate?" Duncan asked, in an attempt to include his friend's daughter.

It failed miserably. Buffy simply said no, while that reminded Joyce of the time she, Tessa, Hank and Duncan had gone to the ice capades.

After dinner, which Duncan insisted on paying for, he suggested they head over to Joe's. Joyce was reluctant, Buffy was underage after all, but he convinced her.

The presence informed him that Methos was already there. He was sitting at the bar, talking to Joe. Duncan waved at them and headed over.

"Joyce, Buffy," he said, "Allow me to introduce Joe Dawson and Adam Pierson. Adam, Joe, this is Joyce Summers and her daughter Buffy."

Buffy looked wearily at them. She felt that sensation again, like Duncan's, only stronger, and it came from one of his friends.

"Pleasure to meet you," Adam said.

"Nice to meet you, too," Joyce replied.

Buffy gave them a brief smile.

"Can I get you guys a drink?" Joe asked.

"A beer for me. Buffy?" Joyce asked her daughter. Turning back to Joe, she asked, "Do you have any pop?"

"Yes, we do. What would you like, Buffy?"

"Coke, please," Buffy responded politely. "Where are the washrooms?"

Joe pointed her to them. When she came out again, Joyce, Joe and Duncan were sitting at a table, laughing and chatting like old friends.

Not wishing to listen to that any more, Buffy went over to the counter and sat on one of the stools out of the way.

She jumped when Adam spoke. "Would you like your Coke?"

Buffy hadn't heard him come up. Now that they were alone, there was no doubt the feeling was coming from him.

"Yeah, thanks," she said.

He gave her the drink and sat down beside her. He pointed towards the others. "Aren't you going to join them?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I had enough of being left out over supper. I don't really want to sit there and listen to their stories." She paused and took a drink before asking, "Why aren't you there?"

"Same reason."

Joyce chose that moment to come over. "Buffy, Adam, why don't you join us?"

Buffy made a face. "I'd rather not."

"Buffy," Joyce said, exasperated and annoyed, "Why are you being so difficult?"

"I'm not, mom. I'm just sick of feeling left out."

Joyce was about to respond when Adam cut in, surprising both women. They had forgotten he was there. "I was just about to leave," he said, "I can give Buffy a ride back, if you'd like."

"Sure," Buffy said, before her mom could decline. "Let's go."

Joyce looked uncertain, but didn't say anything about it. She knew how stubborn Buffy could get, and she didn't want to cause a scene if they started arguing. "Go say goodbye to Duncan and Joe before you leave."

"Yes, mother," Buffy said patronizingly. She went over to their table.

"Thank you, Adam," Joyce said. "I'm sorry about Buffy's behaviour. She's just -"

Adam cut her off with a wave of his hand. "Don't worry about it. It's no problem."

Duncan was suspicious when he heard the news. Methos rarely left so early, nor did he often do favours for people. Especially those he just met. He shot a look at Methos, telling him he was going to ask for an explanation later.

Adam had parked a couple of blocks away. It was dark, with almost no streetlights. Buffy nervously put her hand close to the stake she had concealed in her clothing. It wasn't Sunnydale, but she'd rather be safe than sorry.

In a nearby alley, someone screamed. Buffy ran off towards it without thinking.

A young woman, probably in her early 20s, was there, surrounded by a bunch of vampires.

'Just my luck,' Buffy thought. 'I leave the Hellmouth just to find more vampires.'

"Hey!" she said aloud. "Get away from her!"

A couple of them actually listened, and turned to her instead. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Adam enter the alley. "Damn," she muttered. Why couldn't he have just stayed away. It looked like yet another civilian was going to learn about her so called secret identity.

Buffy didn't have anymore time to think about it. Two vamps rushed her. She surprised them and took one of them out before they realized what had happened. The second one was a bit more cautious the second time he attacked her, but still underestimated the Slayer. He, too, was killed less than a minute later.

The next batch of vampires was much more careful. They knew she wasn't their average human. They still underestimated her, though. Buffy was able to kill them without too much difficulty. It took her some time to finish them off, because there were many attacking at once.

Buffy went to check on the woman. She was in bad shape. Buffy wasn't sure if she'd survive. "I'll just find Adam and - " she broke off and swore. She'd forgotten about Adam. She turned around just in time to see him behead a vampire with a sword. She was so surprised that she did not notice the other vampires arrive. Her first sign of them happened when one of them hit her on the back of her head. She crumpled down as the blackness claimed her.

* * *

> Methos was annoyed. Of all the people MacLeod's friends could be, it had to be her. He quickly slipped into his Adam Pierson persona and greeted MacLeod's friends. He started a conversation with Buffy, ultimately offering her a ride home to find out why she and her mother were in town and whether or not he should leave. <p> When Buffy ran off to investigate the scream, Methos swore. He had no choice but to follow her. <p>

He could just see himself trying to explain to MacLeod. "Oh, I just let her run off by herself. She's a vampire slayer, how was I supposed to know she couldn't take care of herself."

Yeah, Duncan would accept that. He'd have Methos's head before he could finish.

The Slayer caught the vampires' attention. Two of them headed towards her, while three others headed towards him.

He dodged the first's attack. With a single fluid motion, he pulled out his sword and beheaded it. He managed to behead the second one easily too; it was too shocked to move out of the way of the blade. The third proved more of a challenge. It took nearly five minutes for Methos to deal with it.

He may have killed it quickly, but more vampires came to take the place of their dusted comrades. They, unfortunately, did not believe in the one on one rule that immortals adhere by.

He finally dusted the last one and looked to see how Buffy was doing. She had killed the rest of the group, and was looking at him and his sword in shock. She'd obviously seen something. Too late he saw a new vampire sneak up behind her. He shouted a warning, but the demon had already knocked her out.

Dozens of vampires appeared. The new troops easily disarmed him and, surprisingly, knocked him out too.

He awoke with a minor headache, which was already fading away. Thank the gods for immortal healing. The Slayer was beside him, and was also waking up.

"Where are we?" she asked.

"I have no idea," Methos told her. "They knocked me out, too."

"Why'd they do that?" Buffy asked.

"How should I know?" Methos snapped. He didn't like vampires or any other type of demons. He's spent a great deal of his life avoiding

them. Now, not only had they captured him, but he was also imprisoned with the Slayer.

"I don't know!" Buffy snapped back. She didn't like their situation any more than he did. They glared at each other for a couple of minutes, until Methos relaxed.

"I guess I don't need to ask you why you're here anymore," Methos said, more to himself than to her.

"Huh?"

"Obviously you've been sent here to deal with these vampires."

"What!" exclaimed Buffy.

"Please don't tell me there're others. I hate demons."

"How should I know?" demanded Buffy, referring to his first statement.

"Well, you are the Slayer, aren't you?"

To say Buffy was stunned was an understatement. "How'd you know?" she asked before thinking it would probably be a better idea to play dumb.

"It's rather obvious. Few humans would be so blasÃ© about seeing a bunch of vampires. Fewer still would attack them. Only the Slayer would managed to fight so many and survive." Methos didn't add that he already knew who she was. The Slayer's presence was very strong and unique. That would just lead to questions he didn't want to answer.

Buffy accepted the explanation. It did make sense if he had already known about the existence of Slayers. That brought up an interesting point, how did he know? She asked him.

Methos took a moment to think of an answer. "They killed my family." It was partially true. Vampires had killed one of his families, long ago. Of course, he had known about them before then, everyone had. But that was not true of this day and age, and his lie would suffice.

"I'm sorry," Buffy said. She couldn't help but think of a similar conversation she'd once had with Angel. "You're not a vampire with a soul, are you?" she blurted out before she could stop herself.

"What?" exclaimed Methos.

Buffy blushed. "Nothing," she said quickly. "Never mind."

Methos looked at her suspiciously, but thankfully didn't say anything. Neither did Buffy.

* * *

> <p> "Buffy! We're back," Joyce called out into the dark apartment.

There was no answer. Joyce was about to call out again, but Duncan stopped her. <p>

"Shh. She's probably sleeping. It's after midnight."

Joyce giggled in agreement. She was a little drunk. Both she and Duncan went to bed quietly without checking in on Buffy and slept soundly all night.

Duncan was up early the next morning to workout. He was almost finished when Joyce walked in.

"Oww," she moaned. "My head hurts. I really shouldn't have had that much to drink. Why don't you have a hangover?"

"I didn't have as much to drink," he answered. "Is Buffy up yet?"

"No. I'll go wake her." Joyce went back upstairs.

Duncan started to clean up when Joyce came bursting back into the dojo. "Buffy's gone!" she shouted.

"What?"

"She's not there. Her bed hasn't been slept in. She never came back last night." Joyce was frantic.

Duncan was no less worried. His mind raced through several unpleasant possibilities about what may have happened. Had there been an accident? Methos wouldn't have been hurt, but Buffy could have. Did they run into another Immortal?

"You're sure she didn't leave early," he asked.

"Of course I'm sure," Joyce snapped. "Nothing in her room has been touched. She wasn't there."

Her mind had also been thinking of things that may occurred. Seacouver should be safe from vampires, but who knew? Did something attack her?

"I'll call Adam," Duncan said.

He went over to the phone and dialed the old man's number. He let it ring for a couple of minutes before giving up.

"He's not answering," he told Joyce. "He may not be awake. Why don't we go over to see if he's there."

There wasn't anything else to do so Joyce nodded. They grabbed their coats and left.

Methos's apartment was empty. The next place Duncan thought he might be was Joe's.

When they were a couple of blocks away from the bar, Duncan suddenly pulled over.

"What is it," asked Joyce, concerned.

"That's Adam's cars," Duncan said, referring to the car parked in front of them.

"Maybe he's at Joe's," Joyce suggested.

"Maybe," Duncan said.

Duncan drove to the bar and parked out in front. They got out of the car and knocked on the door.

"We're close," Joe called out.

"Joe, it's Duncan. Let me in."

"One minute," Joe called back.

He went over to the door and opened it. "Duncan, Joyce, what are you doing here?"

"Have you seen Adam?" Duncan asked.

"No, not since last night," Joe replied, puzzled, "Why?"

"Buffy didn't come home last night," Joyce told him, her voice strained.

"Adam's car is still parked where it was last night," Duncan added.

Joe's face grew serious. "Do you think it - " he cut himself off before saying anything else. Joyce didn't know about immortals. "What do you think happened?"

"I don't know."

"Should we call the police?" Joyce asked.

"That's probably a good idea," Duncan said.

"The phone's over there." Joe pointed towards it.

Joyce went off to make her call. Making sure she couldn't overhear the conversation, Joe asked, "Do you think it was an immortal?"

"I don't know. Are there any in town?"

Joe shook his head. "Not that I know of. I'll find out."

"Where!" Joyce suddenly cried out. The two men looked over at her. She was very pale. "Okay, I'll be there in a few minutes."

Joyce turned to face them. "The police found a body this morning, two blocks away from here. They think it may be Buffy." As she was saying this, Joyce was heading towards the door. Duncan followed her.

There were many police cars at the scene. They tried at first to keep Joyce and Duncan back, but let them through when Joyce said she thought she could identify the body.

She gave a small sob when she saw the bloody blond body. "Oh my god," she said as she rushed over.

A police officer turned the body over and Joyce got a good look at its face. She almost cried with relief. "It isn't her!" she exclaimed. "It isn't Buffy!"

"What happened, officer," Duncan asked.

"The girl was attacked. She died from blood loss. Now, you'll have to leave. This is a crime scene."

Duncan and Joyce were scooted away. The body was placed in a bag and zipped up. But not before both of them saw the two puncture wounds in the neck.

Joyce paled considerably. She knew what that meant. She had left Sunnydale to get away from vampires. Why did they have to show up here?

Duncan was also concerned. He did not believe in vampires, but he knew of some people who had disguised murders as such. It never failed to bring a general panic to the people.

Just before they were about to head back, Duncan spotted a sword at the edge of the alley. An Ivanhoe, Methos's sword. Apparently he wasn't the only one to see it, for an officer came by and picked it up before Duncan could sneak it away.

When they went back to Joe's bar, the owner was waiting anxiously. "Was it - " he asked, leaving the question hanging.

"No," Joyce said wearily, but relieved. "It was someone else. If you'll excuse me, I have to go make a phone call."

She left, planning on calling Giles. Surely he would know what to do. It gave Joe and Duncan a chance to talk freely.

"There wasn't any signs of a quickening, but I found Methos's sword there," Duncan said.

"What!" exclaimed Joe.

"He dropped it in the alley. The cops found it."

"Methos would never do something as reckless as losing his sword."

"I know. Something serious must have happened."

"So what do we know so far? Methos and Buffy have disappeared. Methos's sword is found at a murder scene, but no signs of a quickening. A girl has been murdered, at the last place we can place them."

"And the girl's murder has been disguised to look like a vampires," Duncan added.

"What?"

"She died of blood loss with two puncture wounds at the neck."

"So where does that leave us?" Joe asked.

"I don't know," Duncan admitted.

Joyce chose that moment to come back into the bar, so they couldn't talk anymore. "Duncan, could you give me a ride to the police station? I should tell them about Buffy."

"Of course."

They spent the rest of the day at the station, getting nothing done. By the time the police were finished taking statements and filling out their reports, the sun had already set. Joyce hadn't found out anything from Giles. He promised to do some research, but there wasn't enough information to really find anything useful.

* * *

> <p> The door opened, causing both Buffy and Methos to wake up. A couple of vampires came in. <p>

"Get up!" one of them barked.

The others went and grabbed them.

"Where are we going?" Buffy demanded.

"You'll see," the first one said.

"Don't say anything," Methos hissed quietly to Buffy.

The vampires dragged the two struggling prisoners through the door and down the hall.

They were brought into a large room, devoid of any furniture. Instead, about two dozen of vampires filled the room. They moved to the side, forming a path that Methos and Buffy were pushed along until they were in front of the vampire that seemed to be in charge.

"So these are the mortals you claim killed my troops," he said, eyeing them doubtfully. "They don't look like they could do much harm."

"They did, master," the demon who had brought them in said.

"Did I ask you to speak?" the master asked archly. The other vampire looked frightened and hesitantly said no.

"Did anyone actually see them do this?" No one answered. The master took their silence to mean no one had. "Then what makes you think these mortals," he spat the word out in disgust, "Could kill my best troops?"

Another vampire that had captured Buffy and Methos answered. "They were in the alley you told us the girl was going to be. Thomas and the others were not there. They would not abandon their posts while

alive."

"This is not the girl I sent you to capture. Where is she?"

Once again no one answered. There were many vampires looking guiltily at anything but the master.

"Am I to understand you did not bring her back?"

The silence was an answer in itself. The master was furious, and everyone knew it. The vampires closest to him started to back off slowly, not wanting to be the receptor of their ruler's rage. There were a few that weren't fast enough, and a stake through their hearts quickly put them out of their pain.

"Bring those mortals to me!" the master shouted. The vampires that had been holding Buffy and Methos quickly obeyed him.

The master put his hand around Buffy's neck and brought her closer to him. Against her will, she started to breathe faster. She was close enough to feel his breath on her face, or at least she would have if the vampire had any breath. He suddenly laughed and threw her back. Another vampire caught her and brought her back beside Methos.

"The girl has power," the master said. "She will do well in the place of the other. You have done well."

"What about the man?" someone from the crowd asked.

"He, too, will take place in the ceremony. Take them back to their cell."

With a wave of his hand, he dismissed them. The vampires holding Methos and Buffy bowed slightly, careful to keep a good hold on their captives, then left the room.

Methos and Buffy were thrown in the room, and the door was locked. They waited until the vampires' footsteps had faded away before talking.

"That was weird," Buffy said.

"Yes," Methos agreed. "Do you know what this ceremony they were talking about is?"

"No, but ceremonies usually equal trouble. I don't think we want to know."

"Well, considering we seem to be expected to take place in this one, I rather know. I don't much like surprises," Methos said in a sarcastic tone.

"Good point."

"So if you didn't know about this ceremony, why are you here in Seacouver?" Methos asked.

Buffy gave a little laugh. "My mom thought I needed a vacation."

Methos stared at her. "Are you serious?" Buffy nodded. Methos threw his head back and laughed. "What about your Watcher? How'd you get him to agree?"

"My mom is very insistent. She wouldn't take no for an answer. Besides, Faith can take care of Sunnydale while I'm gone."

"Sunnydale? You live on the Hellmouth?"

"I take it you've heard of it."

Methos nodded. "I can see why your mother thought you need a vacation. The Hellmouth is a death trap."

"You're telling me," Buffy muttered.

Methos suddenly remembered the other thing Buffy said. "Faith? Who's Faith?"

Buffy hesitated before deciding that it was okay to tell him. Adam was obviously not one of the bad guys. "Faith is the other Slayer."

"There is no other Slayer," Methos stated. "There's only ever one at a time. The new one is only called when the old one dies."

"Yeah, yeah, I know the drill," Buffy said, a little uncomfortably. Dying wasn't a very pleasant experience, and her memory of that night wasn't a nice one.

"You died," Methos said, his eyes lighting up with comprehension. Buffy nodded. "But what happened?" Methos asked, "I mean, you're clearly alive now."

"I drowned," Buffy admitted. "Luckily, a friend of mine found me in time and gave me CPR."

"And now there are two Slayers. That would make your life a lot easier."

"You'd think so," Buffy muttered. At Methos's quizzical look, she shook her head. "Never mind."

Methos didn't press the issue. Instead he looked around the room. "It seems as if we're in agreement that this ceremony is something we want to avoid. Any ideas how?"

"Not really."

"The room seems pretty secure. There are no ways in or out except for the door."

Buffy went over to the door and kicked it as hard as she could. It didn't budge. "And the door seems to be pretty secure."

Methos just gave her a look. "I see," he said. "So it seems as if we are stuck in here at least until the vampires deem to let us out. Then we'll be at their mercy again."

"Definitely not the option I want to go with."

"Me neither. I don't suppose they were nice enough to leave you with any of your weapons." Buffy shook her head. "I didn't think so."

The talk of weapons suddenly reminded Buffy of something. "You," she hesitated, "You had a *sword.* In the alley. When the vampires attacked, you took out a *sword!*"

Methos avoided her gaze. "Yes, I did," he admitted.

Buffy waited for him to continue. When he didn't, she prompted, "And. . ."

Methos turned and looked into her eyes. "And what?" he asked, with a perfectly straight face.

"Well, most people don't go around carrying swords."

"And most people don't fight vampires on a nightly basis."

Buffy was getting impatient. "Yeah, we already went over that. I'm the Slayer, what's your excuse?"

"It's a long story," Methos said. He caught sight of a vent and went over to examine it. "Want to give me a hand here?" he asked, changing the subject. He reached up and tried to pull the cover off. It wasn't budging.

Buffy walked over and placed herself between Methos and the vent. "We've got a lot of time," she said, a little coldly. It wasn't fair that he knew her secret, but she didn't know his. It made her feel a bit uncomfortable and rather nervous. In her experience, secrets led to trouble.

"I'd rather spend it trying to get out of here than exchanging life stories."

"Uh, uh," Buffy said. "You're not getting off that easily. Tell me."

"Let's just say I know there is more things in this world than most people know about. I like staying alive."

"But with a _sword?_" Buffy asked skeptically.

"Why not a sword? We both know how useful a gun is," Methos responded.

"You have a point," Buffy admitted. She knew he wasn't telling her the whole story, but it seemed unlikely he would say anymore. She decided just to drop the subject.

"So are you going to help me or not," Methos asked.

"What are you trying to do?" she asked.

"I'm trying to get this vent open. It looks big enough for you to get through."

Buffy looked at the vent doubtfully. It didn't look big enough to her. "Are you sure?"

"Here, I'll give you a boost."

He lifted Buffy up and she took off the vent cover. She was about to go in when the door opened. Three vampires came into their cell. Buffy looked at them. "I think we're busted," she said.

"I would have to agree with you," Methos replied.

The vampires also agreed with them, although not verbally. They rushed over and tore the two escapee wannabes away from the wall. They weren't exactly gentle, and both Methos and Buffy were nursing bruised arms. Or at least they would be if the vampires hadn't pinned the two prisoners' arms behind their backs.

"Ow, that hurts," Buffy complained. She had slipped back into her habit of provoking vampires.

The look Adam shot her was full of venom and its meaning very clear: keep your mouth shut. They were in enough trouble already. It would not be very good if their captors decided to use violence to keep them quiet. Things would only get worse when they realized that neither of the two supposed mortals weren't being wounded as easily as they should.

Luckily Buffy did what Methos asked, though for a different reason. She did not yet know of Methos's immortality. Enough people had been killed because of her in her lifetime; she didn't want to add another to the list. She decided to keep her mouth shut until they were out of there, or at least until she could be sure they would take out there anger on her alone.

"What should we do with them, Paul?" one of them asked.

"Bring them to the master," another, presumably Paul, answered.

"He said he didn't want to be disturbed," the third added cautiously. "I for one don't want to go against his wishes."

"But he would want to know about this," Paul argued. "Would you rather face his anger if he finds out later on, Mark?"

"I'd rather not be at the receiving end of his anger at all!" Mark loosened his grip on Buffy and turned to face Paul.

It was a painful mistake. Buffy took advantage of the distraction. She wrenched herself out of Paul's grasp and spun around, kicking him in his face.

Methos, who had been expecting the Slayer to do something like that, managed to free himself of Mark's hold. The demon was so surprised he was barely able to put up a fight. Methos knocked him to the ground.

The third vampire had gone after Buffy, which was a good thing. Methos knew he wouldn't be able to handle more than one vampire without any weapons. He was actually a bit surprised he had been able

to dispatch of that one so fast.

Buffy, on the other hand, was more than capable of taking care of two vampires, even without a stake. The vampires hadn't been stupid enough to leave anything wooden in the room, unfortunately, so Buffy could only send them flying to the other side of the room, giving her and Adam enough time to escape.

They ran out of the room and closed the door, locking it. "So which way do we go?" Buffy asked.

"That way," Methos said, pointing a hall on their right.

"How do you know?"

"I don't."

"That doesn't exactly reassure me," Buffy told him.

"It's not supposed to," Methos replied. "But unless you know where we are, and how to get out, we're lost. And that way is just as good as any other way."

Buffy had to admit Adam was right, at least in her mind she did. She refused to acknowledge the truth in his words aloud. She was still annoyed at him for keeping secrets. There was something about him that made her rather uneasy.

They made there way done the hall, amazingly managing to keep from running into any vampires. Their luck soon ran out. Shouts were heard from behind them. Their escape had been discovered. Methos and Buffy both started to walk faster.

It seemed as if fate was against them. A few minutes after the alarm had gone out, the hall came to a dead end. Well, actually to a door. Methos tried to open it, but it was, of course, locked.

"This way is just as good as any other way," Buffy mimicked.

"Oh, shut up," Methos told her.

He was about to say more when he suddenly froze. They could hear footsteps echoing down the hall. Buffy and Methos looked at each other, dread mirrored in both their faces.

"Shit," Methos said.

"Quick, in here," Buffy said, her voice barely above a whisper. She kicked the door open and they slipped into the dark room.

"It's not going to take them long to discover out where we've gone," Methos muttered no louder than she had been.

"Well, I'll think of something we that happens," Buffy retorted. "It may take awhile. They don't even know for sure which hall we went down."

"Yeah, but they'll figure it out when they see the broken door. They're vampires, not idiots."

"I didn't see you coming up with any other plans," Buffy growled, becoming louder in anger.

"Shh." Methos put his finger on his lip. The footsteps came nearer, and both Methos and Buffy thought it was all over.

Suddenly, a voice called out from in the hall; "They aren't here. Let's go back and look somewhere else."

The footsteps faded. The only sound to be heard was the stifled breathing of Methos and Buffy. They waited several minutes just to be safe, before letting out sighs of relief.

"I thought we were done for," Buffy admitted.

"I can't believe they didn't notice the door," Methos said.

"Well, let's not look a gift horse in the mouth." Buffy walked over to the door and put her ear up to it to see if she could hear anything. There was no movement outside.

Meanwhile Methos went searching for a light switch. He soon found it and the room flooded with light. The Slayer and the immortal looked around the room in amazement.

"Jackpot," Buffy murmured.

"I think this was the right way to go after all," Methos gloated.

They were in an armoury. That was the only thing one could call it. There were weapons of every imaginable kind lining the walls. Everything from guns to swords to crossbows to grenades.

Buffy went over and looked at the crossbows while Methos selected a sword. His Ivanhoe was not among the swords, unfortunately. He didn't like using strange weapons. At least there were several swords of good quality. He picked one up and waved it around experimentally, before slipping it into his coat.

He then went over and grabbed a couple of guns and extra ammunition. He tossed one to Buffy, who had selected a crossbow and some extra arrows. She caught it.

"What's this for?" she asked.

"What do you think?" Methos responded in an exasperated tone.

Buffy made a face at him. It was a childish gesture, but it made her feel much better. "I know what guns are for," she answered venomously. "But they don't hurt vampires."

"No," Methos corrected. "They don't kill vampires. They can hurt them, a lot."

"Since when are you the expert on vampires? I'm the slayer here," Buffy shouted.

"Then you should realize that we need every advantage we can get. We're outnumbered and I for one, don't particularly like dying."

"Well, it's not my idea of a fun time, either," Buffy retorted.

"Then why are you arguing with me?"

"I'm not."

Methos gave her a look of disbelief and Buffy found herself blushing. She was arguing with him and she knew it. He just got on her nerves and she couldn't help snapping at him.

"If you're done then maybe we should get out of here."

"This time I'm leading," Buffy told him. Methos nodded and they set off back down the hall.

* * *

> <p> Duncan and Joyce left Chez Felice's and started home. It had been a long day and neither of them felt like cooking. Joyce was worried sick about her daughter. Duncan was worried about Buffy too, but he was also rather concerned about Methos. The old man was good in a fight and Duncan didn't want to think about whom was able to kidnap him and Buffy. Assuming the two had been kidnapped and not just killed. There was also a good possibility that there was another immortal involved. <p>

But that didn't make too much sense. It didn't explain why Methos would have dropped his sword. There was no chance in hell that Methos, the ultimate survivor, would loose his sword if there were another immortal involved. Also, as much as he liked Methos, Duncan knew his friend too well to think the ancient immortal would risk his life for Buffy. So that ruled out an immortal holding her hostage.

There was also that dead girl in the alley. How did she fit in? And why was the death made to look like a vampire was the cause? There were too many piece of the puzzle and none of them seemed to fit.

And then there was Joyce. She hadn't taken Buffy's disappearance well, but who could blame her. Duncan was aware of the stress that she'd been through lately. Nice, relaxing vacation this turned out to be.

The two adults continued walking in silence to Duncan's car. It was now night. The nearly full moon was hanging fairly low in the sky. It seemed like a scene out of a corny horror movie. The only think missing was a wolf howling at the moon off in the distance. Joyce told herself how silly it was to be nervous, but shivered anyways.

Duncan, always the gentleman, asked her if she was cold.

"No," she answered absently.

"It'll be alright," Duncan promised. "We'll find Buffy. She's fine."

"How do you know?" Joyce asked. Her voice cracked and the tears that she had been holding back all day were threatening to come.

There was no satisfactory answer to that and Duncan didn't try to make one up. Instead he repeated, "Joyce, it'll be okay."

Joyce started to sob softly. He pulled her over and gave a comforting hug. He didn't let her go until she stopped crying about ten minutes later. Joyce pulled herself away from Duncan's embrace and furiously wiped away the last hint of tears.

"I'm sorry," she apologized. "I didn't mean to break down like that."

"Don't be sorry," Duncan told her. "I don't know anyone who would be acting differently if they were in this situation."

'Actually,' he thought, 'I'm surprised she didn't do this earlier on.'

Crying had done Joyce some good. She straightened up and smoothed the wrinkles out her shirt. She was determined not to break down like that again. It wouldn't do any good.

The two adults started for the car again, but once again they didn't quite make it there without stopping.

* * *

> <p> Giles was researching again. Sometimes it seemed as if that was all he did. He sighed and took a sip of his tea before turning the page of an ancient book. <p>

He had received a rather disturbing phone call earlier that day from Joyce Summers. Buffy was missing.

It also seemed as if there were vampires operating in Seacouver and Buffy had managed to run into them. That, at least, wasn't surprising. The Slayer attracted demons like a magnet.

Her Watcher was worried. He knew that Buffy was more than capable at handling the more mundane threats of the twentieth century. She could fight lesser demons without even breaking a nail most of the time. She only had trouble with the more powerful ones.

Giles sighed again and turned his attention back to the book he was supposed to be reading. He translated the words slowly. They were in an unusual dialect of Greek that he had trouble with.

He was reading them in a half doze until he finally realized what they said. He stopped short and his face became a shade paler.

"Oh dear," he murmured.

* * *

> <p> "Drive, drive!" Duncan shouted to Joyce. She fumbled with the keys while he pulled his car door shut, then locked it. Joyce started the car and slammed her foot on the gas just as the pursuers reached

the car. <p>

They had been attacked by vampires. Joyce had gotten away without injury, though how she did it, she didn't know. Duncan, on the other hand, didn't. He had been the hero and tried to save his damsel in distress. He quickly realized that their attackers weren't normal, a fact that was confirmed when the vampires put on their game faces.

It was then that Duncan decided running would be their best option. He had shouted at Joyce to get to the car and tossed her the keys.

They made a safe getaway and had been driving for a few blocks before Joyce slowed down a little. She glanced over at Duncan.

"You're hurt," she cried out, worried. She pulled the car over to the side of the road.

Duncan's shirt was soaked with blood. He looked down at it, worried. "I'm fine," he started to say.

Joyce interrupted, "We have to get you to a hospital."

"No," Duncan shouted a little too loudly and quickly.

"Duncan, you're bleeding badly. You need to get a doctor to look at it."

"No doctors," Duncan insisted.

Joyce relented, but added, "At least let me look at it."

She leaned over and pulled his shirt back before Duncan could object. She stared at the wound with frightened fascination as it healed before her eyes. She finally pulled her eyes away from the spot where the wound used to be. Joyce was so shocked she couldn't even speak, only stare at Duncan in horror.

"I can explain," he began.

* * *

> <p> "Oh my god," Joyce said as soon as she found her voice again. "You . . . you," she stuttered, "What are you?" She backed away instinctively. <p>

Duncan closed his eyes, sighing. He gave into the inevitable and began to tell Joyce his secret. "I am an Immortal," he said. "I was born in Scotland in 1592 and I cannot die."

Joyce was staring at him again. "That's impossible," she said.

"You saw what happened," Duncan reminded her. "You saw my wound heal. I can't get hurt, I can't get sick, I can't grow old. I'm Immortal."

"But how's that possible?" Joyce asked. "I mean," she couldn't think of anything to finish her sentence so she just repeated, "How's that possible?"

"I don't exactly know," Duncan admitted. "I'm not sure anyone does."

"You mean there're more like you?" Joyce asked.

Duncan nodded, "Hundreds, probably. I'm not exactly sure how many."

"Of course," Joyce said. "There would have to be more people like you." The shock hadn't been letting her think things through, but when she thought about it, Duncan's answer made a lot of sense.

"Did Tessa know?"

Duncan felt a flash of pain go through him at the mention of this dead fianc e's name. "Yes," he said simply. "I told her just before we moved in together."

"Oh, I'm sorry," Joyce said when she realized the pain she made Duncan feel. "I shouldn't have brought her up."

"No, it's okay," Duncan reassured her.

Joyce didn't bother asking why he hadn't told her before. She knew from first hand experience that those with secrets to hide rarely told anyone unless it was absolutely necessary, not even their own mothers. Besides, she and Duncan weren't even that close.

Duncan sat thinking for several minutes while Joyce drove on in silence. The he frowned, suddenly remembering the reason Joyce had found out about his immortality. "Who attacked us, and why?" he wondered aloud.

Joyce glanced at him, puzzled. She had assumed he knew. "Vampires," she said, matter-of-factly.

Duncan scoffed at her. "You don't believe in them, do you?" he asked in disbelief.

"I don't really have a choice," Joyce muttered before saying louder, "I'm taking it you don't."

"No. They're just a silly superstition. A real vampire would be impossible."

"Are they any less impossible than men who live forever?" Joyce asked him.

"No," Duncan admitted, "But what proof do you have that they exist? In my four hundred years, I have only seen fakes."

"Not anymore," Joyce told him. "Those things that just attacked us were definitely vampire."

"How can you be so sure? Have you ever even seen one before?"

"Yes," Joyce said, "Actually, I have."

"What," he asked. Joyce could tell Duncan didn't believe her and that bothered her a lot.

"Plenty of times," she answered defensively. "What? Why do you believe in people that live forever so easily, but think demons can only be something from fairy tales?"

Duncan looked uneasy at the mention of demons. "I never said I didn't believe in demons, I just said I've never found anything that proved to me vampires exist."

"Well, you do now. Those things that attacked us were vampires."

Duncan decided to suspend his disbelief for the moment so they could actually do something other than debate the existence of the creatures of the night. "Okay, let's say vampires do exist," she started, putting up his hand to stop Joyce's protests. "How do you know that those things that attacked us were them?"

"Their faces, mostly," Joyce said.

"Their faces?" Duncan repeated.

"Didn't you see them?" Joyce asked. "They were rather unique."

Duncan had seen them, but their unusualness had momentarily slipped from his mind. "Yeah," he agreed, "They are. How'd you find out about vampires?"

"Buffy is a vampire slayer."

"Buffy is a _what?_" Duncan exclaimed incredulously.

"A vampire slayer," Joyce said again.

"How'd she get to be a vampire slayer?"

"I don't know exactly," Joyce admitted. "She was born one, or something, I think."

"Born one?"

"Yes. In every generation there's one vampire slayer. She's the only one with the strength to kill vampires, or something like that. I wish Giles was here. He'd be able to explain better than I can."

"Who's Giles?" Duncan asked.

"The school librarian. He's also Buffy's Watcher."

"Watcher?" Duncan all but shouted. "Her Watcher?" he repeated, this time trying and almost succeeding in keeping the surprise out of his voice, making it sound like an idle curiosity. In reality, he was very interested in finding out if Giles was Joe's type of Watcher, and if he was, why Joe had never mentioned vampires or slayers before.

"Yeah. He trains her and researches the demons and other stuff like that. Buffy always goes to him to find out what she should do. He always seems to know exactly what's going on."

No, Duncan decided, Giles was definitely a different type of Watcher. He obviously never had to take the non-interference oath.

"What he the person you called this morning?" he wondered.

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"He doesn't know what happened or what to do," Joyce said, tears threatening her again.

"I thought you said he always knows what to do?"

"No, I said he always seems to know. There's a difference. He said he would look in his books, but he didn't sound too hopeful. I'm supposed to call him again tomorrow morning if Buffy still hasn't shown up."

"So until then there's nothing we can do." Duncan said.

"Not unless we find out where the vampires Buffy went after are."

"What makes you think Buffy went after vampires?" Duncan asked.

"I saw her bracelet this morning in the alley way and that girl was killed by vampires. I'm guessing that Buffy came across them and followed them back."

"I don't think so. If Buffy is with the vampires, I really doubt it's of her own free will. Something must've happened in the alley. Adam's sword was there and he would go anywhere without it." As soon as he said that, Duncan could have kicked himself. He rarely made slips like that. The events of the last 24 hours must have been getting to him. There was no need to tell Joyce about Adam, but it was too late now.

"His sword?" Joyce's voice rose an octave higher on the last word.

"Yeah," Duncan said casually, as if carrying a sword around was an everyday occurrence. "Adam's an immortal, too."

"He is?" Joyce asked, shocked. She knew there were others, but she didn't really expect to know any at all.

Joyce continued, "Do you carry a sword around too?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"For protection," Duncan said without elaborating. He didn't really want to explain the Game to his friend.

"What do you mean?" Joyce frowned.

"It's a long story." Duncan looked at Joyce's resolved face and sighed. He knew she wasn't going to give up until she had the whole story. Resigned to the fact his secret was now going to be out in the open, he began to explain. "What I said earlier wasn't entirely true. There is one way I can die. By beheading."

"Beheading," Joyce interrupted, her voice and her face mirror images of disgust.

"Yes, beheading," repeated Duncan patiently. "The sword is to protect myself from those who want to kill me."

"Who would want to kill you?" Joyce asked, puzzled.

"Other Immortals."

"Why?"

"For my Quickening." At Joyce's blank look he explained. "Every Immortal has a power, a life-force, that is released when they are killed. The Immortal who kills them gets this power. It's called a Quickening."

"Do you mean that you immortals go around chopping each other's heads off?" Joyce exclaimed.

"Some of us do," Duncan said. "Most of us just live a relatively normal life, only fighting if they're challenged."

"So you have to carry your sword around with you at all times," Joyce half asked, half stated.

"Yes."

Joyce continued. "And you saw Adam's sword in the alley."

Duncan nodded.

"So if, as you say, he wouldn't leave it behind if he could help it, something must have happened to him in the alley," Joyce concluded, her face pale once again.

"Yes, and since he left with Buffy, I think we can safely assume that she's with Adam."

"But we don't know where Adam is, so that doesn't help us at all," Joyce said, the frustration clear in her voice.

"Okay, so we know there were vampires involved. They killed that girl in the alley," stated Duncan.

"Right," Joyce agreed.

"And we know that Buffy and Adam were in the alley. The police found his sword and her bracelet. And that also proves that they didn't willingly leave the alley because Adam would never go anywhere unarmed. So, unless something else turns up, I'd be willing to bet

that whatever vampire or vampires that killed that girl also took Buffy and Adam."

"But why would they do that?" Joyce asked.

"I don't know. You're the vampire expert here."

"Not really," Joyce said. "I don't really know anything about vampires."

"But your daughter's a vampire slayer. You have to know something."

Joyce laughed bitterly. "Buffy doesn't tell me anything. The only reason I even know is because a vampire attacked and she dusted it right in front of my eyes."

"Dusted it?" Duncan asked, startled.

"Put a piece of wood in its heart and it burst into dust," Joyce elaborated.

"Does anything else kill a vampire?"

"Umm," Joyce thought for a minute about what her daughter and Giles had told her. "Sunlight. Beheading, too, I think. Holy water and crosses hurt it, I know. I think that's it."

"That's what I've heard. Then they'd need a place to keep their coffins during the day."

Duncan regarded his friend curiously and not without some annoyance when she burst out laughing. "What!" he demanded. "What's so funny?"

"Vampires don't sleep in coffins," Joyce told him.

"But they do in all the movies," Duncan protested.

"Well they don't in real life. But they do need a place to keep out of the sun," Joyce responded.

"Let me guess," Duncan said dryly. "They often have their secret lairs in abandoned warehouses. It seemed like all bad guys, in real life and in stories, favoured abandoned warehouses. Duncan wasn't at all surprised when Joyce nodded.

"Yep. And sewers, too, apparently."

"Sewers?" Duncan was surprised at that. He didn't think any creature other than a rat would want to live in a sewer.

"They're supposed to be good for staying out of the sun and a great way for getting around the city."

"I suppose," Duncan said doubtfully, "But I don't really think these vampires are living in the sewers."

"Then that leaves warehouses. We should start looking. There can't be that many in Seacouver."

"You'd be surprised," Duncan muttered. As hopeless as it sounded, searching the empty warehouses of Seacouver seemed to be the only option right then other than sitting at home and doing nothing.

"Here," Duncan said, "Give me the keys. It'll be easier for me to drive there myself."

Joyce gave him the keys and they switched places. Duncan started the car and began driving. He said, "You do realize that there isn't much chance we'll find them like this. Not to mention the fact that even if we do, it's extremely dangerous."

Joyce cut him off before he could say anything else. "This is my daughter we're talking about," she said. "I don't care how dangerous or how much of a wild goose chase this is. I'm not going to sit around and do nothing. So don't even think about trying to talk me out of doing this."

Duncan did think about it, but wisely kept his mouth shut. In his four hundred years he had seen fierce maternal instincts and knew better than to fight with a woman whose child was in danger. It was like talking to a brick wall. Actually, a brick wall usually listened more.

So they began their most likely futile search for Buffy and Methos.

* * *

> <p> "Shh," Methos said, putting his finger to his lips. He waved his hand, motioning Buffy to stay behind him. She did. <p>

Now that they had stopped, they could hear the frantic footsteps of the searching vampires coming closer. Buffy and Methos turned around and hurried back down the hall, ducking into a room while the vampires passed.

"Another one," Buffy whispered in disgust. "How many of these guys are there?"

"Too many for my taste," Methos responded, also whispering. "It looks like they're all searching for us, too."

"Why couldn't they just leave us along," Buffy moaned softly.

"That would be too easy. It never happens that way in real life. Murphy's Law," Methos whispered with fake cheeriness.

"It's a stupid law," Buffy grumbled.

"Well, I didn't write it," Methos said. He decided to get back to the topic at hand, "So what are we going to do now? They seem to be wherever we go."

Indeed, they did. Three times already had vampires come across the fugitives. Now armed, Buffy was able to kill them before they could give the alarm. Luckily, the vampires were searching in groups of only two, sometimes three. Buffy knew she would be able to handle

larger groups, especially considering most of these vampires seemed to be young, but it would be hard and would take too long. So far, none had expected Buffy or Methos to fight back.

"Why are you asking me?" Buffy asked.

"Because," Methos reminded her, "You're the one who insisted on leading."

"I did not," Buffy protested.

"Did to."

"Well, I take it back," Buffy said, a little childishly. "There seem to be vamps wherever we go. I don't want to be blamed for running into them again."

"No, instead you're going to make me lead so you can blame me if we run into vampires," Methos said.

Forgetting to keep her voice down, Buffy said, "You did it to me!" He had, too. Each time they ran into the vampires, Methos reminded her which one of them had suggested that way.

"So, it doesn't mean you can do it to me," Methos retorted, also temporarily forgetting the need for silence.

"That's hardly fair."

"Life's not fair."

"Oh, shut up," Buffy said viciously. "Shut up and pick a direction."

"I can hardly do both." Buffy glared at Methos. He decided to stop wasting time and answer her question. "Well, there are vampires everywhere we go. We know we can't escape the other way, so we may as well keep on going the same way we were."

Buffy realize the logic in what he was saying, but refused to tell him that. She was still mad that he seemed to blame here for running into the vampires. It wasn't like she wanted the demons to find them. But the way he was acting, you'd think she did.

If she had known more about Methos, she would have found out the reason that he had been acting like he had been was because he had known other Slayers. He knew of their abilities. He knew that Slayers had the ability to sense vampires, a talent that wasn't one of Buffy's strong points.

In fact, if truth be told, she sucked at it. There had never been any real reason to improve that sense. Living in Sunnydale she always had more than enough targets who would put on their game faces and real their demonic identity at the drop of a pin.

Most other Slayers, on the other hand, lived at one point or another in their lives, in a place with a lot fewer vampires that were more cautious about showing themselves. These Slayers needed to hone their sense to find any vampires.

Of course, Methos didn't know this. He thought Buffy was just being careless. That was why he was so annoyed when three times Buffy led them straight into vampires.

They continued along the maze of halls for another half-hour or so. True to her word, Buffy mocked Methos when he led them straight into two vampires. After she staked the, of course.

They hadn't seen or heard any vampires for a full ten minutes when Methos suddenly felt a familiar presence. An Immortal was nearby.

Buffy looked at him, startled, when he sword softly cursing their luck. Methos had seen Immortals that worked with vampires before. It was always an ugly sight and never a good thing, especially for him.

"What is it?" Buffy whispered urgently.

"Quick," Methos said, not explaining. "We have to go back."

"No," Buffy said stubbornly. "We've already been that way. There's no way out back there."

She started to go forward, but Methos stopped her.

"Don't be an idiot," he said as he pulled her back. "We can't go that way."

"Why not?" Buffy asked, her jaw set with determination.

"Because," Methos lied, "There're vampires that way." He continued to pull Buffy back the way she came.

"There are not," Buffy said. She pulled away from him and started walking in the opposite direction.

"Are too," Methos grabbed Buffy again and tried to pull her back. It didn't work this time.

"Stop it," Buffy said. "There aren't any vampires that way."

"There are."

"How can you tell?" Buffy asked.

Methos hesitated and Buffy continued before he could come up with a good answer. "You can't," she said. "If you could, you wouldn't have let us walk into all those others."

Once again Methos was interrupted before he could respond. This time it wasn't his companion who kept him from talking. It was voices. Vampires were coming from the direction in which they had come. The direction Methos had wanted to go two seconds ago.

"Hurry," Buffy whispered and she pulled Methos down the hall towards the other Immortal. She dragged him around the corner, coming face to face with the other Immortal.

* * *

> <p> "Mom?" "Buffy!" "Methos!" "MacLeod?" the four of them shouted at once. Then, almost in unison, Methos and Buffy yelled, "What are you doing here?" <p>

"Buffy," Joyce exclaimed. "Are you okay?" She ran over and hugged her daughter tightly.

"Yeah, I'm fine, mom," Buffy said, struggling to get away from her mother. "But what are you doing here?"

"Looking for you," Joyce said.

"How did you find us?" Buffy wondered.

"You're sure you're not hurt," Joyce asked.

"I'm sure, mom," Buffy said again, exasperated. "But, what are you doing here?"

"We here to rescue you," Joyce said.

"I think what Buffy meant was how did you find us?" Methos said.

"Well, it was actually dumb luck," Duncan admitted. "We were searching all the empty warehouses of the area. This one had a lot of activity going on considering it's supposed to be abandoned, so we decided to check it out."

Methos sighed. Only MacLeod would stumble across this almost by accident. "Why were you searching empty warehouses?"

"We were looking for you," Joyce answered.

"No, I meant why were you looking in empty warehouses?" he repeated, stressing the last word.

"Well, Buffy says that vampires often hide in warehouses."

"Of course. Buffy says vampires hide in warehouses," Methos muttered. He saw Joyce about to explain so he quickly said, "Never mind. I don't really want to know." Then, to Duncan, "I thought you didn't believe in vampires."

"Well, I had a change of heart," Duncan admitted.

"You guys are so going to explain after we leave," Buffy said.

"What happened to you?" Duncan asked.

"Long story short, we were kidnapped by vamps, escaped, got lost, found you. Now, we can leave," Buffy chirped.

"Okay," Joyce said. "So, which way do we go?"

Methos and Buffy stared at her. "You don't know?" Buffy asked in a weird voice.

Joyce and Duncan exchanged a guilty look. "Well, umm," Duncan started, "We kind of got lost on our way in."

"You kind of got lost. Perfect," Buffy said.

"How did you manage to get lost?" Methos asked, annoyed.

"When we first got in, someone spotted us and chased us for awhile. We managed to loose him, but lost our way as well," Duncan explained.

"We were trying to find our way out when we ran across you," Joyce added.

"I guess you don't know the way out, then," Duncan said.

"If we knew the way out, we wouldn't have wandered around the place for the last four or five hours," Methos told them angrily.

"Look," Buffy said, "Let's not get into a fight here. Mom, Duncan, can you remember anything?"

They both shook their heads. "Okay," Buffy continued. "I guess we just have to keep going the way we were."

"Which is?" Duncan asked.

"Guess and hope we get lucky," Buffy said in mock cheerfulness.

"Are you serious?" Joyce asked in disbelief.

Buffy and Methos nodded solemnly.

"So, MacLeod," Methos said. "Which way shall it be?" Neither Buffy nor Methos wanted to lead, knowing the other would jump all over their mistakes. MacLeod didn't know this so he gladly took lead.

"This way, then," MacLeod said, referring to the direction from which he and Joyce had just come.

"Let's go then," Buffy said.

"There they are!" a voice shouted. The entire group turned towards it and saw three vampires running towards them.

Buffy responded immediately. She aimed her crossbow and let loose the arrow. Right away she reached for the quiver on her back and took out another arrow. She loaded it and shot it at the second vampire. It missed his heart, embedding in his shoulder.

"Damn," she swore as she prepared her third arrow.

Meanwhile both Duncan and Methos had drawn their swords and Joyce had taken out a cross. Both men headed for the two vampires. Duncan managed to swing twice before one of the vampires kicked his sword halfway across the hall. Methos, who knew how vampires fought, stabbed one through the heart.

It laughed. "That won't kill me, you stupid mortal. Only wood kills me."

"Beheading does," Methos said. He pulled out the sword and quickly beheaded the demon.

"Duck!" Buffy yelled. Methos did and Buffy shot another arrow right over his head. This one got its target. It exploded into dust.

"I see why you say you 'dust it'" Duncan said. He picked up his sword and examined it, making sure it was okay.

Buffy ignored him, instead turning to Methos. "Don't block my way," she said.

"I was killing a vampire," he said.

"I could have done it myself," Buffy responded defensively.

"Really? You could have fooled me. I never knew a vampire's heart was in his shoulder."

"Oh, sorry. I missed one shot out of twenty."

"It could have meant our death," Methos argued.

"It didn't, did it?" Buffy yelled.

Joyce and Duncan looked on with amazement. Joyce decided to jump in before they brought out weapons. "Umm, guys?"

Buffy and Methos stopped glaring at each other and looked over to Duncan and Joyce. Realizing what they had been doing Buffy began to blush furiously. Methos merely stepped back, his face showing no emotions.

Changing the subject slightly, Methos asked, "How many arrows do you have left?"

Buffy looked. "Not many. I've used half of them already."

The group had started to walk again.

"Damn. Well, we should have enough to last us until we get out. Unless something happens, that is."

Buffy stared at him in disgust. "You just cursed us, you know."

"What do you mean?" Duncan asked, curiously.

"It's a known fact," Buffy said. "If you talk about something bad, especially if you say it won't happen, it will happen."

"Oh, that's really childish reasoning," Methos said.

"It is not," Buffy said.

Methos didn't have to reply to that. He just gave her a look that

said it all.

"Don't look at me like that!" Buffy exclaimed.

"What are you talking about?" Methos asked innocently.

"You know what she's talking about," Duncan said.

"Will you two stop bickering?" Joyce asked.

"Yes, it's getting very annoying," Duncan agreed.

"We are not bickering," Methos and Buffy both protested.

"Oh!" Joyce said suddenly remembering the other contents of her purse. "I probably should have given this to you before the fight, but I kind of forgot." She reached in and pulled out a wooden stake. She gave it to her daughter.

"Where'd you get this?" Buffy asked in amazement.

"We stopped by Duncan's place and got some stuff before we came," Joyce told her.

"Why didn't you tell us?" Methos asked.

"I kinda forgot," Joyce admitted.

Methos shook his head but kept his mouth shut.

They came to the end of the hall. They could go either left or right. "Which way should we go?" Duncan asked.

"It's your choice, O wise and fearless leader," Buffy said.

"Buffy," Joyce warned.

"Sorry," Buffy apologized. "It's been a long day."

"Speaking of which," Methos said. "How long have we been here?"

Duncan chose the left hall. "Well, you left the bar around nine last night. Did they get you soon after?"

"Almost right away," Buffy told him.

"Then that would make it about thirty or so hours," Duncan told them.

"Thirty hours?" Buffy exclaimed. "It didn't seem that long."

"We must have been unconscious for a half that time," Methos reminded her. "And we've been wandering around lost for almost six hours."

"I didn't think we were out that long," Buffy admitted.

"Neither did I, but we must have been."

"So, Duncan, Joyce, what happened to you?" Methos asked.

Duncan explained, with Joyce adding the parts he forgot or didn't know. He had reached the part when the vampires had attacked them outside the restaurant when the hall came to an end again. This time, however, it was a dead end. Except for two huge, menacing doors in front of them. The whole group stopped and stared at the doors.

"I guess we should try the doors, then," Buffy said. She didn't mean it though. She didn't like the doors.

"It is the only way," Methos agreed.

"Well, what are we waiting for?" Joyce asked. She went over and pulled the doors open.

"Uh oh," Buffy said when she got a look inside the room.

"My thoughts exactly," Methos said.

It was the "throne" room Buffy and Methos had been taken to earlier on. In the middle of the room, surrounded by a half a dozen vampire guards, was the master. He was looking right at them.

* * *

> <p> "These are the mortals that have been so hard to find?" the master asked. "The ones everyone has been looking for? Do I have complete morons working for me?" <p>

The vampires all looked ashamed, and a little scared. "Well," the master continued, "What are you waiting for? Get them, you idiots."

Everyone in the room leapt into action, except for the master himself. He was content to let others do the dirty work for him.

"Mom!" Buffy yelled, "Get out of here!" She kicked the closest vampire back while firing her crossbow at another one. It hit its mark and the vampire exploded. "One down, six more to go," she muttered to herself.

Joyce ran out of the doors, Duncan and two vampires on her heels. Methos and Buffy also tried for the door, but one vampire still in the room was smart enough to close and lock the doors. She lost her life for that when Buffy reached her.

There were three vampires left, not including the master. He was starting to look concerned, but still didn't make any move.

Methos killed one of the vampires, and moved in on his second vampire. He tried the trick he used to kill the vampire earlier. He plunged the sword into the vamp's chest and then, when he wasn't expecting it, beheaded it. It worked perfectly the second time, too.

Outside the room, Joyce fumbled with some holy water, trying clumsily to take the lid off. She splashed it on the nearest vampire, which

ran away, screaming like a baby.

Duncan was fighting with the last vampire. It was blocking all his swings. Finally it knocked the sword right out of Duncan's hand. It stood there with a wicked smile on its face, gloating for a moment before it moved in for the kill.

It never got the chance. Joyce sneaked up behind it and staked it in the back. A horrible look of comprehension was on its face before it exploded into dust.

"Thanks," Duncan smiled.

"You're welcome," Joyce replied.

Buffy staked the last vampire inside, turning around just in time to see the master sneak up on Methos, who had just killed his vampire. "Watch out!" she yelled.

Methos turned his head to see what Buffy was warning him about. He instinctively ducked when he caught sight of the master. He wasn't fast enough. The master ripped the sword out of Methos's hand and ran it through his chest.

"Adam!" Buffy screamed as Methos fell first to his knees, then to the floor. He was dead.

Buffy furiously ran over to Methos and yanked the sword out of the body. She twirled it around a few times, trying to get the feel. Then she attacked the master.

He grabbed the sword that was hanging above his dais. He wielded it, fending off Buffy's frenzied blows perfectly. He soon managed to disarm Buffy, who wasn't a very good swordsman. He grabbed Buffy by the back of her neck and drew her closer.

"I would have rather waited for the ceremony, but I'm not too picky," he said.

Buffy was struggling a lot, trying to get free, but the vampire only tightened his grip on her. She tried going limp to catch him off guard. The master was able to recover quicker than Buffy expected and she didn't get free.

"Stop struggling!" he ordered.

"You're used to getting your own way," Buffy remarked.

"No one ever crosses me," the vampire leader boasted.

"Well, get used to it," Buffy shouted as she finally twisted out of the master's grasp. She pulled a stake out of her sleeve and slammed it into his chest.

The vampire's shocked and horrified look soon turned to one of relief when he realized the wood had missed his heart.

"You'll have to try harder than that," he said, mimicking the exact words Sunnydale's dead Master had once told Buffy. For a second she panicked, remember how close to dying, well to dying forever, she had

come that night two years ago.

A second was all this master needed. He grabbed Buffy again, with a grip so tight Buffy knew the marks would be there for a week. Assuming she lived that long. For the first time in a long time it looked like she was going to seriously die.

The vampire master had pulled her in close and his fangs were millimetres from biting her neck when a gunshot sounded.

The master lost his grip on Buffy and she ducked out of the way, letting Methos shoot the vampire several more times, right in the chest. Buffy stared at the man she had seen dead just a few minutes ago.

"Don't just stare," he said, annoyed. "Kill the bastard."

Dumbly Buffy picked up the stake which had fallen to the floor and threw herself at the vampire. For the second time that evening she slammed the stake into the master's chest. She didn't miss the heart this time and the vampire was no more.

"Adam," Buffy said, her voice quivering. She knew he hadn't been turned; no vampire had drained his blood and he had tasted none himself. Once again her thoughts turned to Angel and his deception when they first met. "I thought you said you weren't a vampire with a soul," she joked, shaking.

Methos gave her a weird look. "What is it with you a vampire's with souls. Vampires don't have souls."

"I know that," Buffy said absently, still unable to tear her eyes away from her "dead" friend. "But how . . . what . . ." She didn't know what to say, how to phrase the question that was burning to be asked. "You were dead," she settled for.

"I know that," Methos said, letting his voice sound annoyed in hopes that it would help Buffy understand and accept the fact that he was alive. "I'm Immortal."

"Immortal?" Buffy asked

"You know, someone that lives forever, a person that can't die," Methos said.

"But, but . . ." Buffy trailed off.

"But?" Methos asked.

"But how?"

"I honestly don't know," Methos said. "All I know is that I recover from all mortal wounds."

"How old are you?" Buffy asked curiously. She had finally gotten over the shocked. It was easier for her to accept it than a normal person, whose whole life didn't revolve around fighting the forces of evil and killing supernatural beings every night.

"Old enough," Methos said evasively.

"You didn't answer my question," Buffy accused him.

"You're right," Methos said in his infuriating way. Then, to keep her from asking any more questions, he said, "Shouldn't we go check on your mother and MacLeod?"

Buffy's eyes widened in horror as she remembered the vampires that had run out of the room after her mother. "Mom," she said as she ran to the door.

The Slayer unlocked it and threw the doors open. Both MacLeod and Joyce, who had been trying their best to find a way back inside, stumbled in.

"Are you okay, mom?" Buffy asked.

"I'm fine, honey. Are you alright?" Joyce asked, looking Buffy over to see if her daughter had hurt herself.

"I'm fine, mom," Buffy said.

"I hate to break up this touching reunion," Methos said. "But I for one would like to find a way out of this god forsaken place."

* * *

> <p> The group finally arrived at Duncan's place. Buffy immediately collapsed on a chair. Methos followed her example after stopping off at the fridge for a beer. <p>

"I told you so," Buffy suddenly said out of the blue.

"You told me what?" Methos asked.

"You cursed us and I told you so," Buffy explained.

"I did not curse us," Methos said indignantly.

"You did too," Buffy argued. "You said things couldn't get any worse, and they did."

"First of all, I said we had enough arrows unless something happened, and second, that was in no way cursing us."

"See!" Buffy exclaimed. "You admitted you said it."

"Of course I said it. I can hardly argue differently. You all heard me say it. But I didn't curse us. Besides," Methos added, "we would have been fine if you had better aim."

"What!"

"I said, we would have been - "

Buffy cut him off. "I know what you said," she said icily.

"Then why'd you ask?"

Buffy clenched her teeth. "What I meant was, what do you mean?"

"I mean we would have been fine if you had better aim," Methos said.

"My aim is fine!" Buffy yelled.

"If your aim is so good, why did you miss the master's heart? You were less than a foot away."

The phone rang, interrupting the argument.

Duncan answered it, "MacLeod."

He listened for a minute before handing it to Joyce, saying, "It's for you."

"Hello?" Joyce said into the phone. "Giles!"

"Giles?" Buffy asked, surprised. "Why would he be calling?"

"Your mother phoned him when you disappeared," Duncan told her.

"Who's Giles?" Methos asked.

"My Watcher," Buffy told him.

"Ah."

"We found Buffy," Joyce was saying. "Yes, she's fine."

"Hey Giles!" Buffy yelled to the phone.

"I'm going to put you on speakerphone," Joyce said.

"Buffy?" Giles' voice sounded a little weird over the phone, at least to Buffy.

"I'm here, Giles," the Slayer answered merrily.

"Thank God you're alright," Giles said, his relief noticeable. "What happened?"

"Got kidnapped by vamps, escaped, killed them, came home. How was your day?"

"Are they all dead then?" Giles asked.

"Most of them."

"Is their leader still alive?"

"No," Methos said.

"Who's that?" Giles asked.

"A friend of mine," Buffy told him. "He was there."

"Oh. Well," Giles said, "I guess you don't need to know now, but I found out who kidnapped you, and why."

"You did?" Buffy asked, excited. "Who?"

"An old vampire, named Kykiote. It was part of a prophecy calling for Slayer's blood."

Joyce's face became very pale as she realized how close her daughter had come once again to death.

Buffy was upset, too, but also confused. "But I wasn't the first choice for the ritual. They were supposed to bring in another girl."

"Yes, Catherine Waters, the girl that died. She was a potential slayer," Giles explained.

"A what?" Duncan asked.

"In every generation there is a chosen one. She's the only one with the strength and skill to kill vampires. But there are a lot more girls with the potential to be a slayer. When the old one dies, one of the potential slayers becomes the Vampire Slayer."

"How'd the vamp know this Catherine girl was a potential slayer?" Buffy wanted to know.

"There are many indications of a potential slayer. Many vampires, at least the older ones, can tell who they are. The Watcher Council also needs to be able to find and train these girls," Giles explained.

Suddenly Buffy yawned and it was contagious. Giles heard them and said, "I think I should get going. I'll see you when you get back, Buffy."

"Bye Giles," Buffy said sleepily. He hung up.

"I'd better get going, too," Methos said. "It was nice meeting you Joyce, Buffy."

"Will you be around tomorrow?" Duncan asked.

Methos glanced at Buffy. "I don't think so," he said.

"Yeah," Buffy chimed in. "To quote the Simpsons, once you've been through something like that with someone, you never want to see them again."

"Good bye, Buffy," Methos said.

"Bye," Joyce said. Buffy smiled and waved. Despite her words, she did like him and they both knew it.

Adam left and Buffy went to her room to sleep, leaving only Joyce and Duncan.

"Well, this wasn't exactly the nice, relaxing vacation I promised you," Duncan said.

"No, it wasn't," Joyce replied. "But at least everything turned out

okay in the end."

"Good night, Joyce," Duncan said, giving his friend a kiss on the cheek before going to bed himself.

" ' night, Duncan," Joyce said.

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The End

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